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A STUDY OF DROPOUTS IN TEXAS AND MINNESOTA.

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DESCRIPTORS- DROPOUT PROBLEMS, #DROPOUTS, #DROPOUT CHARACTERISTICS, SURVEYS, HIGH SCHOOLS, DROPOUT PREVENTION, TEXAS, MINNESOTA,

THE PURPOSES OF THIS COOPERATIVE STUDY WERE TO LEARN (1) WHETHER POTENTIAL DROPOUTS CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY DEFINITE CHARACTERISTICS, (2) THE TYPE OF GUIDANCE SUCCESSFUL IN HOLDING STUDENTS IN SCHOOL, (3) REASONS STUDENTS GIVE FOR DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL AND THE GRADES AND AT WHICH AGES THEY DROP OUT, AND (4) THE SCHOLASTIC ABILITY OF THE DROPOUTS. QUESTIONNAIRES WERE RETURNED BY PRINCIPALS AND COUNSELORS IN 181 RANDOMLY SELECTED SCHOOLS IN MINNESOTA AND 105 IN TEXAS. THE DROPOUT RATE IN BOTH STATES WAS DECREASING. FINDINGS SHOWED THAT MORE BOYS THAN GIRLS DROPPED OUT AND THAT THE 10TH OR 11TH GRADE, OR AGE 16, WAS THE MOST FREQUENT DROPOUT TIME. DROPOUTS USUALLY HAD UNDESIRABLE HOME ENVIRONMENTS, POOR ATTENDANCE RECORDS, LITTLE PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, AND, OFTEN, LOW ABILITY, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY FAILING. COUNSELORS FELT THAT MOST OF THEIR SUCCESS IN WORKING WITH DROPOUTS WAS BY INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE. WORK AND MARRIAGE WERE FREQUENT REASONS GIVEN FOR LEAVING SCHOOL. SOME CONCLUSIONS WERE THAT THE SCHOOLS MUST CONTINUE TO LESSEN DROPOUT NUMBERS BY EXPANDING GUIDANCE, BROADENING THE CURRICULUM BY INCLUDING NONACADEMIC COURSES AND JOB TRAINING, ESTABLISHING TECHNICAL SCHOOLS, AND ENCOURAGING EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPATION. REPORTS OF OTHER DROPOUT STUDIES AND A BIBLIOGRAPHY ARE INCLUDED. (MS)

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FOREWORD

The number of youth who leave high school before graduation is increasing by about one million per year toward an expected total ten million by 1970 unless preventive actions are applied promptly and vigoroulsy. Simultaneously, each new step in automation further decreases the already greatly diminished number of jobs for which non-high school graduates can qualify. The public and educational press, and the radio and television, are pouring forth facts that describe the plight of the vast segment of youth out of school and out of work. In the aggregate their condition poses a dangerous threat to our social structure.

How to prevent high school dropouts and how to help those who have already left school early have combined to become an educational and social problem of top priority to the secondary school administrator and the community he serves.

The report in hand is therefore timely. Its findings should have significance for all junior and senior high schools. It is hoped that even those already applying good solutions may find new slants in some of the practices described in the report.

The study was begun by Clinton H. Knudson as a seminar project at The University of Texas in 1960–61 while he was on leave from the Northrop Collegiate School, Minneapolis, as an N.D.E.A. fellow. It was continued as a master's thesis after his return to his position. Mr. Knudson's Minnesota contact helped facilitate the inclusion of data from that state to supplement those originally collected for Texas.

Gratitude is expressed to the author and to the secondary school principals in both states for making this report available for publication. It should contribute substantially toward the much-needed solutions of the dropout problems.

The University of Texas
Austin, Texas
February 15, 1964

J. G. UMSTATTD, *Coordinator*
The Texas Study of Secondary Education

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The education of youth has always been a primary concern of Americans. We have always considered that education is essential to responsible citizenship and that maximum educational opportunities must be offered to our children. In this increasingly complex society, this need for education has become ever more necessary. Educational opportunities in America are excellent, yet we find that an alarming number of students are still poorly prepared to meet today's complicated world. Developments in technology are raising the need for more education and it has been estimated that by 1970, only five percent of all available jobs will be of the unskilled variety. Consequently, American educators have had an increasing concern over the problem of dropouts.

Table 1 indicates that in the year 1932, less than a third of the students gradu-

TABLE 1

Approximate Retention, Fifth Grade Through College Entrance
1924–25 to 1955–56

For Every 1,000 Fifth Graders in	This Many Entered Ninth Grade	This Many Graduated from High School	This Many Entered College	Year of College Entrance
1924–25	612	302	118	1932
1926–27	677	333	129	1934
1928–29	736	378	137	1936
1930–31	780	417	148	1938
1932–33	776	455	160	1940
1934–35	803	467	129	1942
1936–37	839	393	121	1944
1938–39	796	419	(1)	1946
1940–41	781	481	(1)	1948
1942–43	807	505	205	1950
1944–45	848	522	234	1952
1946–47	872	553	283	1954
1948–49	863	581	301	1956

(1) Lack of detailed information on veteran students would make any calculation of retention rates unreliable.

Source: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States*, 1954–56, Ch. 1, "Statistical Summary of Education, 1955–56," Table 6, p. 13.

ated from high school. By 1956 well over half of the students were staying in high school until they graduated and indications are that this gradual improvement in retention has continued since 1956. Yet with our ever-increasing total population, it has been estimated that our yearly dropout from high schools probably amounts to about a million students per year.

This tremendous waste of human resources indicates the seriousness of our dropout problem in America but perhaps the best indication of our concern about the problem can be found by reading the following statement from *Education for All American Youth,* the 1952 volume of the Education Policies Commission:

> When we write confidently and inclusively about education for all American youth, we mean just that. We mean that all youth, with their human similarities and their equally human differences, shall have educational services and opportunities suited to their personal needs and sufficient for the successful operation of a free and democratic society.*

The purpose of this study is to determine if there are certain definite characteristics which could be used to identify the potential dropout and to find out what types of guidance and counseling procedures have proved to be successful in keeping students in school. The study also attempted to find what reasons are given by the dropout for leaving school, the age at which most dropouts leave, and the scholastic abilities of the dropouts. Information about some of the home environmental factors was another objective of this study.

It was hoped that it might be possible to determine whether high schools today are doing a poorer job of holding students in school or whether the increase in dropouts, that we continually hear about, can partly be attributed to an increase in our total population.

In order to obtain this information, a letter was sent to selected principals and counselors of high schools in the states of Texas and Minnesota. This letter contained a questionnaire which sought information about the individual high schools and their holding power.

In this same letter, these school administrators and counselors were asked if they would cooperate with this study and supply information about individual dropouts. The schools in both states were selected at random and as a result were of varying sizes and represented towns and cities of all populations.

The response to the first questionnaire was excellent. A total of 181 schools in Minnesota and 105 in Texas returned their forms and most of them indicated a willingness to provide further information about individual dropouts. Those who could not give further information usually gave lack of time as their reason for not cooperating.

* See bibliography at end of the report.

TABLE 2

Returns by Size of School

Size of School	Texas Schools	Minnesota Schools	Total
Under 400	35	118	153
400 to 1000	38	43	81
Over 1000	32	20	52

Table 2 shows a breakdown of the schools that responded to the first questionnaire for both states. In Texas there were about a third of the schools in each size category while in Minnesota more small population schools responded to the first questionnaire.

The number of second questionnaire forms returned was gratfying. In Minnesota 450 of these forms were collected and tabulated. Texas counselors returned 103 reports on individual dropouts for a total of 553 for the two states. The information collected was tabulated by state and then a comparison made between the reults from Texas and those from Minnesota.

The second chapter of this report gives a summary of some of the other important studies done in recent years concerning the problems of dropouts. The information collected and tabulated for the state of Texas is presented and analyzed in the third chapter, while the same information for Minnesota is presented in the fourth chapter. The final chapter presents a summary of the main findings of this study along with recommendations for use of the procedures discovered.

CHAPTER 2

OTHER DROPOUT STUDIES

Various studies concerning the dropout problem are available in professional educational literature, the majority statistical in emphasis, looking towards understanding of the magnitude of the problem. Other articles describe various methods schools used in handling the problem of the dropout. Few studies analyze either individual dropouts or their families intensively. The literature thus shows a broad picture of the dropout problem plus some rather general agreement as to the need for more adequate counseling services in the schools, but little concerning the individual.

Among the significant studies made to show the value of a counseling program is an eight-year study made in a Tucson, Arizona high school between 1946 and 1953. This study showed that before 1946 Tucson's dropout rate was always between twenty and twenty-two percent. After a counseling system was established in 1947, the dropout rate dropped to approximately fourteen percent.[16*]

Another program of intensive guidance reported by the New York City Board of Education shows that after five years of specialized guidance given to fifteen year olds, the retention rate was much better than a similar group of fifteen year olds who did not receive the intensive guidance and counseling.[2]

Mr. William T. Jaques in an article titled "Hastings High School Works on the Dropout Problem," reports that some success in keeping students in school was attained by first identifying potential dropouts by a list of characteristics and then assigning each of these students to a favorite teacher. This teacher made an attempt to take a special interest in the potential dropout so that the student would know the school personnel were concerned with his school progress.[6]

A study done at Southwest High School in Atlanta is reported by Claude C. Wills, Jr., in the September, 1956, issue of the *National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin*. This study indicates that the reasons given by students for leaving school are usually not the real reasons. In this Atlanta school, the reasons most frequently stated by the dropouts were "going to work" and "disinterested." The author contends in his report that the real reason is probably the inability to do work of a satisfactory nature, poor health, dislike of school, lack of money, or marriage. Prevention of dropouts, he states,

* See bibliography at end of publication.

must begin long before the actual act of dropping out and this can only be done by early identification of the potential dropout. After identification, a cooperative program must be established on the part of the counselors and the teachers to try to remedy these potential causes for the withdrawal from school.[15]

Several attempts have been made to identify potential dropouts. William Evraiff, in an article titled, "How Different Are Our Dropouts?" reports on the results of a battery of tests administered to students in California. Data for this study were obtained by giving a battery of tests to seventy-two students who had dropped out of school and were attending some classes on a part-time basis at a continuation school. These results were compared with the scores of seventy-two students who were still in school. The results of these intelligence, aptitude, and vocation preference tests indicate that, at best, mental ability is only a partial reason for leaving school. There was little indication of any differences in the results of the vocation aptitude tests given to the two groups. The educational level of both the father and the mother of the school-leaver was lower than that of the parents whose children stayed in school. A slightly higher percentage of the school-leavers came from broken homes. The parents of students who stayed in school exhibited higher educational aspirations than did parents of the school-leavers. Dropouts had more experience in "worldly" activities such as going steady, drinking, and smoking. Those who left school also did not achieve as much academic success in school as measured by grades. Those still in school chose academic subjects as their favorites while school-leavers chose sports and physical education as their favorites.[4]

Another report on identifying characteristics of the dropout is reported by Edward S. Cook, Jr., in an article titled, "Analysis of Factors Related to Withdrawal from High School Prior to Graduation." From a battery of tests administered and from school records, a comparison was made of students who withdrew from a metropolitan high school in 1952–53 with another group in the same school who stayed in school. Some of the most significant results of this study indicate that the youngest children of a family are less likely to withdraw from school while children who are intermediate in ordinal position are more likely to become dropouts. The records indicate that withdrawals from school had transferred from one school to another more often than did those who stayed in schol. The personal adjustment of the dropout toward school, home, family, and health is also poorer than that of the nondropout.[2]

A study completed in 1962 by the Minneapolis School Board shows a dropout rate of sixteen percent during the year. A random sample of 1,262 students who were in the ninth grade during 1957–58 was checked in June 1962. Any who had not graduated were considered to be dropouts. This is less than the national dropout rate between grades nine and graduation which is about

thirty-three percent. This same study reports that graduates scored higher than dropouts on tests of intelligence and reading comprehension. Forty percent of the dropouts had one or more police contacts compared to eleven percent for the graduates. Half of the dropouts had I.Q.'s of 96 or below but six out of one hundred had I.Q.'s of 115 or better. The dropouts averaged twice as many days absent compared with the graduates. Dropouts were more often rated by the school personnel as being "less stable emotionally, less reliable, and less cooperative."[12]

R. J. Thomas in a study conducted in Chicago attempted to relate ten factors to the dropout problem. After analyzing records of some 3,000 students, he discards factors of age, reading ability, grades, ethnic and racial background, and sex as not significantly related. Significant relationships did appear when he compared students enrolled in various curricula as college preparatory, business, and trade. Socioeconomic status and I.Q. were also related significantly. The most significant factor of all those considered was participation in extracurricular activities.[10]

A similar study of correlates was done in Georgia by Joseph Bledsoe in 1957, using a population of nearly 20,000 students. He compared characteristics of the students with those of the state's population, taken from census data. Significant relationships were found between dropping out and occupational level of the parent, with proportionally fewer dropouts coming from families of professional and managerial, agricultural, clerical, and sales persons. Proportionally more dropouts came from the unskilled, unemployed, and retired statuses. A similar pattern was found in regard to the educational level of the parents.[1]

A study sponsored by the United States Office of Education, was begun in 1951 to show retention rates of 22 large American city school systems. The study was started with ninth grade classes of September, 1951, and continued for four years. The variations in retention rates were from a high of eighty-nine percent to a low of forty-five percent, but these large cities all showed a gradual improvement in holding power. All schools recorded better retention of girls than boys; the most common reason given for withdrawal was to find employment. They found a large amount of transfer of students from one school to another within the city and between the cities. This study also indicated that the largest amount of dropouts occurred at the tenth grade level.[11]

A final statistical study may indicate the direction further investigations in this area may take—that of the intensive investigation of individual dropouts and their families. Fortuna Mannina, writing in the *Journal of Educational Sociology*, tells of a carefully designed and executed study with a group of dropouts and a control group of nondropouts, matched on socioeconomic backgrounds, age, and I.Q. Mr. Mannina agrees that low socioeconomic status is im-

portant; nonetheless he says it cannot be the only factor, for not all children from this background drop out. What factors within the family can be seen? Via an interviewing schedule, pretested, with results analyzed statistically, he indicates some areas for consideration. He found no significant differences between the families of the value they give to education. Nearly all the parents verbalized their desire for more school for their children. Many of both groups had aspirations for professional careers for their children. Significant differences between the groups did show in the interest and encouragement given to the school child, as in consulting teachers, attending PTA's, and so on. Another factor related significantly was the presence or absence of friends with children in college. Mannina concludes by emphasizing how difficult it is to measure subtle factors and he pleads for more detailed study to produce a sharper picture of the dropout and his family.[8]

Lastly, the recent book titled *The Drop Outs,* by Lichter, Rapier, Seibert, and Skalansky, should be mentioned. A three-year project is described whereby dropouts are given treatment by individual counselors, after a complete and intensive study was made of the psychological problems of the dropouts. The book offers much information that school counselors can use in working with the individual dropout. The book consists mainly of case history material which might offer some help in understanding the total dropout problem.[9]

CHAPTER 3

THE TEXAS DROPOUT POPULATION

The two states in this study, Texas and Minnesota, have differing past records as far as holding power is concerned. A discussion pamphlet published by the Research Division, Department of Classroom Teachers of the National Education Association reported in 1959 that high school graduates in 1955–56, as a percent of the eighth grade enrollment in 1951–52, shows Wisconsin first with 93.1 percent, Minnesota second with 82.6 percent, and Texas thirty-second with 59.9 percent. Mississippi ranked last with 43.4 percent.

In the present study, sufficient information was given on the first questionnaire from 98 Texas schools to calculate dropout rates. For the school year 1960–61, the average dropout rate for these 98 Texas schools was 3.3 percent. A school's dropout rate for the year was the percentage of students out of the total school's enrollment who left school before graduation. Those who transferred were not considered to be dropouts. The dropout rates of the 98 Texas schools were averaged. For the school year 1954–55, these same schools had an average dropout rate of 5.6 percent annually. This indicates a definite improvement in holding power over this period of six years.

These dropout rates are somewhat deceiving since they were calculated for all grades between seven and twelve and dropout rates for junior high schools are usually lower than those in the senior high school. For example, when the dropout rates of 1960–61 were analyzed for Texas junior high schools in the sample, the rate was only 1.9 percent, while the dropout rate for grades ten through twelve was 4.6 percent. These comparative dropout rates for Texas schools are given in Table 3.

TABLE 3

Dropout Rates for Texas Schools

Type of School	Dropout Rate in Texas
Senior high schools only (grades 10–12) in 1961	4.6%
Junior high schools only (grades 7–9) in 1961	1.9
Combined junior and senior high schools (grades 7–12) in 1961	3.3
Combined junior and senior high schools (grades 7–12) in 1955	5.6

Characteristics of the Schools in the Sample

The schools in this survey can be divided into various categories according to their method of organization. The Texas sample had a wide variety of types of organization. The most commonly used system was the 6-3-3 classification with forty percent of the Texas schools using this system. The second most common method of organization was the 8-4 plan. Table 4 indicates the organizational plans of the Texas schools.

TABLE 4

Dropout Rates According to Town Population

Location of School	Population of Town	Dropout Rate	Number of Schools
Urbanized area	over 10,000	2.4%	50
Urban towns	2,500–10,000	3.8	26
Rural towns	under 2,500	3.5	22

The Texas schools in this study ranged in size for a school with only 60 students in six grades to one with 3,968 students in six grades. The Texas sample of 105 schools could roughly be divided into the following categories:

1/3 of the schools had an enrollment up to 399 students;
1/3 of the schools had an enrollment between 400 to 899;
1/3 of the schools had an enrollment of 900 or more students.

The number of students in a grade also showed a wide range in the Texas schools. The smallest schools had an average of only 10 students in each grade, while the largest had an average of 908 per grade. The total Texas sample could roughly be divided in the following manner according to grade size:

1/3 of the schools had less than 99 students per grade;
1/3 of the schools had between 100 and 300 per grade;
1/3 of the schools had over 300 students per grade.

Dropout Rates by Size of School and Town

If the average dropout rate is calculated for the small schools of Texas, those with less than 100 students per grade have a dropout rate of 6.3 percent. The average dropout rate of the middle-sized school with a grade size between 100 and 300, is 2.9 percent. The dropout rate of the large school with a grade size of over 300 is also 2.9 percent. This would indicate that the smaller Texas schools have the poorest holding power.

Corroborative evidence for this finding was seen when the Texas schools were divided into groups according to the population of the city or town in which the

schools were located. According to the United States Census Bureau, those cities with a population of over 10,000 are referred to as urbanized areas, those with a population between 2,500 and 10,000 are referred to as urban towns, and those under 2,500 are designated as rural towns. This classification was used in grouping the schools according to town population and dropout rates were calculated. These rates showed that large city schools of Texas have a better holding power than do the smaller communities. The dropout rates as determined in this manner for Texas schools are shown in Table 4.

School Concern with the Dropout Problem

In the questionnaire, a variety of factors used in identifying potential dropouts were listed and counselors asked to comment on the use of these factors. These factors are listed in Table 5. Apparently schools and their counselors use

TABLE 5

Factors Used in Identifying the Potential Dropout

Factors	Degree			
	Fully	Some	Little	None
Reading ability of student	22	58	18	2
Amount of extracurricular participation of student	11	45	32	8
Financial problems of the family	19	54	24	8
Health problems of the student	20	42	26	8
Home environment and atitude of the parents towards school	48	51	3	1
Scholastic achievement of student	46	45	7	0
Personal habits of the student	22	60	16	1
Emotional status of student	24	50	19	2
Students attitude towards school	49	49	4	0

approximately the same factors to the same degree in attempting to identify potential dropouts. In analyzing the factors from the quesionnaire, a value of three was given if the factor was fully used, a value of two if it was used little, and a value of zero if it was not used at all. The average total for all factors was approximately eighteen points out of a perfect of twenty-seven points that could be obtained if a school used all factors fully. This average of eighteen points did not vary according to school size, grade size, or dropout rate. That is, schools with higher dropout rates used these identifying factors as much as those with low dropout rates.

Another way of analyzing the efforts made by Texas schools in identifying potential dropouts is shown in Table 5. The numbers in the table represent the total number of schools that checked that particular degree. The least used fac-

tors in identifying potential dropouts were the amount of extracurricular participation of the student, the financial problems of the family, and health problems of the student. The three most used factors were home environment and attitude of the parents towards school, students attitude towards school and scholastic achievement of the student.

In the same manner, counselors were asked to check to what degree they made certain efforts to keep the potential dropout in school. The efforts most often made to keep students in school in Texas are special guidance and counseling, and homeroom guidance and counseling. The least amount of efforts was made

TABLE 6

Efforts Made To Keep the Potential Dropout in School

Efforts	Degree			
	Fully	Some	Little	None
Special guidance and counseling	47	38	6	0
Home visitation:				
By case worker	9	17	9	30
By counselor	15	27	11	23
By homeroom teacher	8	20	16	24
By other teacher	8	31	16	19
Homogeneous grouping of classes	20	44	12	15
Special vocational training course	12	42	15	20
Special reading classes	13	36	20	21
Part-time jobs for students	10	39	19	26
Participation in extracurricular activities	12	43	23	5

in home visitations by a caseworker and part-time jobs for students. The tabulations in Table 6 show the results of this part of the questionnaire. The numbers in the table represent the number of schools that checked each effort to that degree.

The most crucial time for dropouts from Texas schools appears to be during

TABLE 7

Grade Level of Dropouts

Grade Level at Time of Dropout	Number	Percent
7th grade	113	4.7
8th grade	194	8.0
9th grade	484	19.9
10th grade	666	27.5
11th grade	627	25.9
12th grade	339	14.0

the tenth and eleventh grades. Table 7 is a tabulation to show the total number of dropouts reported from each grade level by the schools participating in this study.

Characteristics of the Texas Dropout

A total of 103 reports on individual dropouts from Texas schools was tabulated. These individuals were selected at random by the counselors or in some of the smaller schools where a counselor wasn't employed, the forms were filled out by the superintendent or principal. A breakdown of the sex of these individual dropouts showed that 69 percent were male and 31 percent were female. This aspect of the dropout problem has serious implications since male dropouts thus form a sizable portion of an already glutted market for unskilled labor.

The analysis of the ages at which students withdrew from Texas schools showed that the greatest number of students left school at the age of sixteen.

TABLE 8

Age at Time of Dropout

Age at Time of Withdrawal	Number of Students	Percent
13 years	0	0
14 years	7	6.9
15 years	12	11.7
16 years	45	43.8
17 years	23	22.0
18 years	13	12.7
19 years	3	2.9
20 years	0	0
21 years	0	0

TABLE 9

Grade Level at Time of Dropout

Grade Level at Dropout	Number of Students	Percent
7th grade	4	3.9
8th grade	10	9.7
9th grade	43	41.8
10th grade	19	18.5
11th grade	22	21.3
12th grade	5	4.8

This is the legal age at which students may leave school. Table 8 lists the number of persons who withdrew at each age level.

The results from Texas schools showed most dropouts occurred at the ninth grade level. Table 9 shows the number of students who left school at each grade level.

Another question on the form asked the counselor to rate the individual dropout according to his ability. The results of this part of the questionnaire are given in Table 10. About half of the dropouts were considered by their counselors to be of average ability and just under six percent were considered to be of high ability.

Counselors were also asked to give the approximate grade averages of dropouts at the time they left school. About one in seven was actually failing at the time of leaving school, although a majority of them were doing poor work. "D" was the model grade as indicated in Table 11.

TABLE 10

Scholastic Ability of Dropouts

Ability of Dropout	Number of Students	Percent
High ability	6	5.8
Average ability	47	45.6
Low ability	50	48.6

TABLE 11

Grade Averages of Dropouts

Approximate Grade Average	Number of Students	Percent
A	0	0
B	11	10.7
C	27	26.2
D	50	48.6
F	15	14.5

The individual dropouts of Texas were also ranked by the counselors according to their attendance records. Their attendance was classified as either excellent, fair, or poor and this tabulation is given in Table 12. About half of the students who dropped out of school had a poor attendance record.

The Texas dropouts studied in this survey were more urban than rural. Almost twice as many dropouts came from the urban areas, though a look at

census data which lists Texas as seventy-five percent urban and twenty-five percent rural, shows us that the rural Texas youngster is over-represented in this dropout sample. Evidence presented earlier would corroborate this, since both smaller schools and smaller towns have higher dropout rates than large school systems and large cities.

A tabulation of the occupations of the mothers of the dropouts indicates an almost entire absence of any of the professions. Most of the mothers were listed as housewives as shown in Table 13.

TABLE 12

Attendance Record of Dropouts

Attendance Record	Number of Students	Percent
Excellent	15	14.5
Fair	37	36.0
Poor	51	49.5

TABLE 13

Occupations of Mothers of Dropouts

Occupation	Number of Mothers	Percent
Housewife	68	66.0
None given	16	15.4
Laborer	8	7.8
Waitress	5	4.8
Deceased	2	2.0
Church custodian	1	1.0
Telephone operator	1	1.0
Seamstress	1	1.0
Nurse	1	1.0

The fathers of the dropouts were also largely in nonprofessional jobs. Table 14 shows that most of the fathers were working as laborers with only a few who were in business or had a trade.

The majority of the mothers of the dropouts in Texas had a grade school education only and none of the mothers had been to college. The educational background of these mothers is given in Table 15. The three individuals in the Texas sample with no formal education were Latin Americans.

The educational background of the fathers of the dropouts is similar to the mothers of the dropouts. A majority of the fathers had a grade school education only, as indicated in Table 15.

TABLE 14

Occupations of Fathers of Dropouts

Occupation	Number of Fathers	Percent
Laborer	43	41.75
Farmer	20	19.42
None given	11	10.68
Deceased	8	7.77
Mechanic	2	1.94
Unemployed	2	1.94
Service station attendant	2	1.94
Salesman	2	1.94
Carpenter	2	1.94
Fireman	1	.97
Plumber	1	.97
Retired	1	.97
Janitor	1	.97
Radio repairman	1	.97
Teacher	1	.97
Trucker	1	.97
Watchman	1	.97
Boiler engineer	1	.97
Painter	1	.97
Bus driver	1	.97

TABLE 15

Education of Parents of Dropouts

Education	Number of Mothers	Percent	Number of Fathers	Percent
No education	3	2.9	2	1.9
Grade school	68	66.0	62	60.2
High school	15	14.5	20	19.4
College	0	0	0	0
Not reported	17	16.6	19	18.5

There was little tendency on the part of dropouts to participate in extracurricular activities. The counselors were asked to rate the amount of participation of each dropout and this information is tabulated in Table 16. Most of the dropouts did not participate at all or in only "some" activities.

The most usual time for students to drop out of school was in the fall. This is undoubtedly explained by the large number of students who did not return

to school in the fall. Many became sixteen years of age during the summer months and did not return to school in the fall. (Table 17.)

The most usual reason given by the dropout for leaving school is to find a job. The second most common reason is because of pregnancy or to get married. A list of the reasons given is found in Table 18.

If the counselors thought that the reason given by the student was not the real reason, they were asked to give what they thought to be the reason why the student left school. By examining Table 19 we can see that these reasons

TABLE 16

Participation in Extracurricular Activities of Dropouts

Amount of Participation	Number of Students	Percent
Considerable	4	3.9
Some	26	25.1
None	72	70.0
No report	1	1.0

TABLE 17

Time of Year of Withdrawal from School

Time of Year	Number of Students	Percent
Fall	67	65.1
Winter	15	14.5
Spring	21	20.4

TABLE 18

Reasons Given by Dropouts for Leaving School

Reasons	Number of Students	Percent
To get a job	40	38.6
Marriage or pregnancy	22	21.3
Lack of interest in school	12	11.8
To join military service	7	6.8
Health reasons	7	6.8
No reason given	4	4.0
Disliked school	3	2.9
Failing subjects (low grades)	3	2.9
Poor home situation	3	2.9
Discipline problems	1	1.0
Legal age for leaving	1	1.0

TABLE 19

Reasons Given by Counselors for Dropouts Leaving School

Reasons	Number of Students	Percent
To get job	21	20.4
Marriage or pregnancy	20	19.4
Lack of interest	13	12.7
No other reason given	12	11.7
Poor home situation	12	11.7
Lack of ability	7	6.9
Discipline problems	5	4.8
Health problems	3	2.9
Not with age group	3	2.9
Failing subjects	3	2.9
To join military service	2	1.9
Poor attendance	1	1.0
Too much night life	1	1.0

Source: "High School Dropouts," Research Division and Department of Classroom Teachers, National Education Association, Washington, D.C., September, 1959, p. 2.

given by the counselors do not always agree with the reasons given by the dropouts in Table 18.

The results of this survey of Texas schools would indicate that the state has a wide variety of types of organizations in its schools and also a wide range of school sizes. Small schools in small towns of Texas apparently have more of a dropout problem. Most efforts to keep students in Texas schools were made by special counseling and guidance. The most numerous dropouts from Texas schools occur during tenth and eleventh grades, with about two-thirds of these dropouts being boys and one-third girls. As might be expected most students left school at the legal dropping out age of sixteen. Indication of the wasted scholastic talent is shown by the fact that almost six percent of the Texas dropouts were considered to have high scholastic ability while over ten percent of the dropouts had a "B" grade average. About half of the Texas dropouts had a poor attendance record while in school. Almost two-thirds of the dropouts in Texas were from urban residences. The parents of the dropouts were occupied in nonprofessional occupations and a large percentage of these parents had only a grade school education. Most Texas dropouts had not participated in any extracurricular activities while in school. The most usual reason given for leaving school was to obtain a job though marriage was often the reason given.

CHAPTER 4

THE MINNESOTA DROPOUT POPULATION

In Minnesota 174 of the first questionnaires gave enough information to calculate the percentage of dropout of the total enrollment during the year. When this percentage was averaged, the dropout rate for Minnesota schools in this study was a very low 1.7 percent. The questionnaire also asked the counselors to give their total number of dropouts for the year 1954–55. Minnesota's average dropout rate for that year was calculated at 2.3 percent.

If the 1961 rate is calculated for the junior high schools of Minnesota in this survey, the rate is only .6 percent. The rate for senior high schools was 2.8 percent for that same year. This gives an indication that most dropouts occur after a student has finished the junior high school. Table 20 contains this information about the dropout rates of Minnesota schools.

Characteristics of the Schools in the Sample

Minnesota schools are organized essentially on two plans—the 6-3-3 system and the 6-6 arrangement. Table 21 shows the number of schools in this survey and their plan of organization.

TABLE 20

Dropout Rates for Minnesota Schools

Type of School	Dropout Rate in Minnesota
Senior high schools only (grades 10–12) in 1961	2.8
Junior high schools only (grades 7–9) in 1961	.6
Combined junior and senior high schools (grades 7–12) in 1961	1.7
Combined junior and senior high schools (grades 7–12) in 1955	2.3

TABLE 21

Types of School Organization

Classification	Number of Schools	Percent
6–6	97	53.9
6–3–3	73	40.6
6–2–4	1	.6
8–4	9	5.0

The Minnesota schools showed a wide range of size. The schools in the sample could be divided into thirds in the following manner:

1/3 of the schools had less than 250 students;
1/3 of the schools had from 250 to 400 students;
1/3 of the schools had 400 or more students.

There was also a wide range of grade size in the Minnesota schools. These can also be divided into thirds in the following manner:

1/3 of the schools had less than 39 students per grade;
1/3 of the schools had between 40 and 69 students per grade;
1/3 of the schools had more than 70 students per grade.

When dropout rates are calculated for the small schools of Minnesota (those with less than 39 students per grade), the rate was 1.6 percent. The middle-sized schools had a rate of 1.5 percent. The large schools with a class size of more than 70 students per grade had a dropout rate of 2.1 percent. This would indicate that the smaller Minnesota high schools have a better holding power.

Using the United States Census Bureau's classification of cities according to population, Table 22 indicates the dropout rate of schools according to the population of the place where they are located. Again there is an indication that the large city schools of Minnesota have the poorest holding power.

TABLE 22

Dropout Rates According to Town Population

Location of School	Population of Town	Dropout Rate	Number of Schools
Urbanized area	over 10,000	2.8%	13
Urban towns	2,500–10,000	2.1	27
Rural towns	under 2,500	1.6	133

School Concern with the Dropout Problem

The counselors were asked to check a list of factors that they used in trying to identify the potential dropout. The most frequently utilized factors were scholastic achievement of the student, student's attitude toward school, home environment and parent's attitude towards school. The least used factors were the amount of extracurricular participation of the student, financial problems of the family, and personal habits of the student. (Not tabulated)

In the same manner the counselors were asked to check the efforts most used in keeping potential dropouts in school. Table 23 indicates that Minnesota counselors made most use of special guidance and counseling. Very few home

TABLE 23

Efforts Made to Keep the Potential Dropout in School

Efforts	Degree			
	Fully	Some	Little	None
Special guidance and counseling	74	94	5	2
Home visitation:				
By case worker	7	21	7	74
By counselor	24	53	38	37
By homeroom teacher	4	24	31	60
By other teacher	4	48	41	44
Homeroom guidance and counseling	21	66	38	38
Special vocational training courses	20	78	37	28
Homogeneous grouping of classes	22	88	30	32
Special reading classes	13	65	42	62
Part-time jobs for students	1	39	50	69
Participation in extracurricular activities	35	105	25	5

visitations were made by caseworkers or homeroom teachers. If visitations were made, they were most often made by a counselor. Slightly more than half of the schools reported that they used homeroom guidance and counseling either fully or to some degree. More than half of the schools also used special training courses fully or to some extent as an effort to keep students in school. Almost two-thirds of the schools used homogeneous grouping of classes either fully or to some extent. About forty percent of the schools utilized special reading classes fully or to some extent. About one-third of the schools reported that they arranged part-time jobs to some degree. Considerable effort was made to keep students in school by encouraging participation in extracurricular activities with over eighty percent of the schools using this technique either fully or to some degree.

The number of students who dropped out of Minnesota schools in this survey of the year 1959–60, is tabulated in Table 24. This would indicate that the biggest dropout in Minnesota is during the tenth and eleventh grade.

TABLE 24

Grade Level of Dropouts

Grade Level at Time of Dropout	Number of Students	Percent
7th grade	22	1.4
8th grade	49	3.2
9th grade	170	11.2
10th grade	460	30.3
11th grade	493	32.4
12th grade	326	21.5

Characteristics of the Minnesota Dropout

A total of 450 reports on individual dropouts, of whom 60 percent were males, was submitted by Minnesota high school counselors.

An analysis of these individual dropouts shows that in Minnesota more students leave school at the age of sixteen than at any other age. Table 25 lists the number of students dropping out at each age level.

A tabulation of the grade level at the time of dropout was calculated from all the individual dropout records and this information is presented in Table 26. We see that more dropped in the eleventh than in any other grade.

TABLE 25

Age at Time of Dropout

Age at Time of Withdrawal	Number of Students	Percent
13 years	1	.2
14 years	5	1.1
15 years	38	8.5
16 years	215	47.8
17 years	148	32.9
18 years	37	8.2
19 years	5	1.1
20 years	0	0
21 years	1	.2

TABLE 26

Grade Level at Time of Dropout

Grade Level at Dropout	Number of Students	Percent
7th grade	1	.2
8th grade	7	1.6
9th grade	54	12.0
10th grade	136	30.2
11th grade	145	32.2
12th grade	107	23.8

The majority of dropouts belonged to the white race but the presence of a minority group in Minnesota is indicated by the American Indian dropouts. This picture of dropouts in Minnesota is misleading, since it does not include the area where Minnesota's only substantial minority group resides. Twin City schools with large Negro enrollments did not respond to this survey; therefore, very few Negroes appear as dropouts. Table 27 lists the race of the Minnesota dropouts.

The counselors who cooperated in this study were asked to rate the dropouts as to ability. This information is presented in Table 28. At least half of the dropouts were considered to be average or above in intelligence.

In a similar manner, the counselors were asked to give the approximate grade averages of the individual dropouts. This information is listed in Table 29. Less than twenty percent of the dropouts were actually failing at the time they left school.

TABLE 27

Race and Ethnic Origin of Dropouts

Race-Ethnic Origin	Number of Students	Percent
White	442	98.2
Latin American	0	0
American Indian	7	1.6
Negro	1	.2

TABLE 28

Scholastic Ability of Dropouts

Ability of Dropout	Number of Students	Percent
High ability	44	9.8
Average ability	184	40.9
Low ability	222	49.3

TABLE 29

Grade Averages of Dropouts

Approximate Grade Average	Number of Students	Percent
A	8	1.8
B	21	4.7
C	107	23.8
D	230	51.1
F	84	18.6

The attendance records of the dropouts were rated by the counselors and the results of this are given in Table 30. Almost half of the dropouts were considered to have a poor attendance record.

The occupations of the mothers of the Minnesota dropouts are listed in

TABLE 30

Attendance Record of Dropouts

Attendance Record	Number of Students	Percent
Excellent	68	15.1
Fair	178	39.6
Poor	204	45.3

TABLE 31

Occupations of Mothers of Dropouts

Occupation	Number of Mothers	Percent
Housewife	314	69.8
None given	40	8.9
Laborer	29	6.5
Waitress	27	6.0
Deceased	13	2.9
Store clerk	7	1.6
Cook	6	1.4
Teacher	3	.7
Nurse	2	.4
Bookeeper	2	.4
Nurses aid	2	.4
Taxi driver	1	.2
Baby sitter	1	.2
Hairdresser	1	.2
Secretary	1	.2
Telephone operator	1	.2

Table 31. Most of the mothers were classified as housewives with very few listed as members of the professions or trades.

The same information is given for the fathers of the dropouts in Table 32. Most of the fathers were listed as farmers or laborers with very few classified as employed in a trade or profession.

The educational background of the mothers of the dropouts in Minnesota is given in Table 33. Fifty-five per cent of the mothers had only a grade school education, with only a very small percentage having attended college.

The same information about the educational background of the fathers of the dropouts is presented in Table 34. Sixty-two percent of the fathers had only a grade school education, with only a few having attended college.

The amount of participation in extracurricular activities of the dropouts was found to be very small.

TABLE 32

Occupations of Fathers of Dropouts

Occupation	Number of Fathers	Percent
Farmer	153	34.0
Laborer	79	17.6
None given	29	6.6
Deceased	26	5.9
Unemployed	19	4.2
Trucker	19	4.2
Mechanic	18	4.0
Salesman	13	2.9
Miner	9	2.1
Carpenter	8	1.8
Logger	7	1.6
Construction worker	7	1.6
Brick mason	6	1.4
Railroad worker	6	1.4
Retired	5	1.1
Janitor	5	1.1
Machinist	5	1.1
Service station attendant	3	.7
Construction contractor	3	.7
Cafe operator	2	.4
Watch repairman	2	.4
Electrician	2	.4
Store clerk	2	.4
Butcher	2	.4
Grocery store operator	2	.4
Sailor	2	.4
Prisoner	2	.4
Grain elevator operator	2	.4
Crane operator	2	.4
Constable	2	.4
Welder	2	.4
Baker	1	.2
Broker	1	.2
Attorney	1	.2
Painter	1	.2

TABLE 33

Education of Mothers of Dropouts

Education	Number of Mothers	Percent
No education	0	0
Grade school	251	55.8
High school	119	26.4
College	7	1.6
Not reported	73	16.2

TABLE 34

Education of Fathers of Dropouts

Education	Number of Fathers	Percent
No education	0	0
Grade school	280	62.2
High school	85	18.9
College	5	1.1
Not reported	80	17.8

TABLE 35

Time of Year of Withdrawal from School

Time of Year	Number of Students	Percent
Fall	235	52.2
Winter	113	25.1
Spring	102	22.7

Most dropouts are recorded in the fall of the year, probably because of the large number who do not return to school after the summer vacation. (Table 35).

The reasons given by the dropout for leaving school are listed in Table 36. High on the list of reasons are pregnancy or marriage and wanting to find a job.

If the counselors did not think that the reason given by the student for leaving school was the true reason, he was asked to give his estimate. A list of reasons given by the counselors is presented in Table 37. Poor home situation and lack of ability are reasons often seen by the counselors but not mentioned by students.

TABLE 36

Reasons Given by Dropouts for Leaving School

Reason	Number of Students	Percent
Marriage or pregnancy	96	21.3
To get job	75	16.7
Failing subjects (low grades)	61	13.6
Lack of interest in school	43	9.6
No reason given	39	8.6
To join military service	34	7.4
Legal age for leaving school	27	6.0
Discipline problems	26	5.8
Disliked school	22	4.8
Sent to institution	9	2.1
Poor home situation	6	1.4
Excessive absences	4	.9
Health reasons	4	.9
To go to trade school	4	.9

TABLE 37

Reasons Given by Counselors for Dropouts Leaving School

Reason	Number of Students	Percent
No other reason given	243	54.0
Poor home situation	51	11.3
Lack of ability	44	9.8
Lack of interest	31	6.9
Discipline problems	26	5.9
Failing subjects	17	3.8
Outside interests (car)	15	3.3
Emotional problems	12	2.6
Poor attendance	6	1.4
Financial problems	5	1.1

In summary, the Minnesota dropout rate is rather low when compared with other states. The state has essentially only two types of school organization, the 6-6 plan and the 6-3-3 type. Large schools in urban areas of Minnesota have the greatest dropout problem. Counseling and guidance are the most widely used practices in attempting to identify and keep potential dropouts in school. Most Minnesota dropouts left school during the tenth and eleventh grades and at the legal age for leaving school at 16. About sixty percent of the Minnesota dropouts were male. An indication of the wasted scholastic talent in Minnesota is indicated by the fact that almost ten percent of the dropouts

were considered to have high ability. Almost half of the dropouts had a poor attendance record while in school. The parents of dropouts were largely occupied in nonprofessional jobs and most had had only a grade school education. Extracurricular participation on the part of the dropout while in school was not very extensive. The most usual reasons given by the dropouts for leaving school were to get married and get a job.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Even though the actual number of dropouts is increasing, this study would indicate that the jobs that the schools are doing in trying to keep students in school has improved. This is indicated by a steady decrease in the dropout rate in both the states covered by this study. This can also be confirmed to some extent by the statistics recently compiled by the United States Census Bureau. The information given in Table 38 shows the changes in percentages of persons between 14 and 17 years of age, inclusive, who were enrolled in successive decades after 1930.

The 1960 United States Census figures also give information as to the total number of persons between ages 14 and 17, inclusive, who are not in school, 100,538 in Texas and 15,473 in Minnesota). This information is presented in Table 39.

TABLE 38

Percentage of Students in School Between Ages 14 and 17, Inclusive

Year	Percentage Enrolled in Texas	Percentage Enrolled in Minnesota
1960	84.0	92.8
1950	78.0	87.4
1940	75.0	80.6
1930	70.9	74.1

TABLE 39

Number of Persons Between Ages 14 and 17, Inclusive, Not in School

Year	Number in Texas	Number in Minnesota
1960	100,538	15,473
1950	101,290	21,205
1940	126,724	39,388
1930	131,262	50,716

Again from this table we can observe that the number of students in the age group not in school has actually decreased while the total population during this same thirty years has increased.

This type of information by no means diminishes the seriousness and enormity of the dropout problem, but it does give hope that our schools will continue to be concerned about the problem and will be looking for the best ways to identify the potential dropout. Once these potential dropouts have been identified, it is possible that better ways will be found to keep them in school by means of special courses and a curriculum that will better meet their needs. With this in mind, it is hoped that the information and data collected in this research will be of use to school administrators and counselors in working to make dropouts become less of a problem in American education.

This study indicates that boys are more prone to drop out of school than girls. This means a large number of unskilled boys are being dumped annually into an already overcrowded labor market. Yet most of these boys give as their reason for leaving school the desire to seek a job. Certainly more opportunities for obtaining some marketable skill should be provided by American schools.

The findings also reveal several indicators of the potential dropout that could be used by counselors. Usually the home environment of the dropout is not too desirable. The parents are likely to be poorly educated themselves and are involved in jobs of the nonskilled and nonprofessional nature. The potential dropout is often of lower than average ability but he is not necessarily always failing. He most usually drops out of school when he is allowed to do so legally, which is 16 years of age in many states. This dropout from school thus usually occurs in the tenth or eleventh grade. During the time that the dropout has been in school his attendance record has been poor and there is little evidence of any participation in extracurricular activities.

Teenage marriages, especially because of pregnancy, are another important factor that must be dealt with in this problem of dropouts.

Apparently counselors feel that their most success in working with potential dropouts is by individual counseling and guidance. They also feel that guidance and counseling on the part of the homeroom teacher is quite effective. Special reading classes for those with reading problems are considered very useful in keeping the potential dropout in school. Many schools have found that grouping students in classes according to ability is effective in providing more specialized instruction for this type of student. Some schools have also provided part-time on the job training for their students and have found this useful in combating dropouts.

Since over half of the dropouts were ranked by their counselors as being average or above in ability, it is imperative that continued efforts be made to stop

this waste of human potential. It is hoped that the information presented in this survey will emphasize the importance of the dropout problem in America today, and that the statistics can be of some use to school officials, teachers, and counselors in dealing with students. We cannot expect to solve the problem immediately but with new information can come new ideas for new methods, new approaches and new revisions in curricula, always with the hope of making the American school truly an education for all youth.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a list of the following recommendations might be offered:

1. Even though American schools are doing an ever-better job at keeping students in school, continued efforts must be made to further improve the situation.
2. Schools of America should expand and increase their programs in guidance and counseling.
3. More course offerings should be made in high schools for the nonacademic student. These should especially be in areas of job training.
4. More area technical schools should be established to train dropouts for specific jobs.
5. More efforts should be made to encourage those who have already dropped out of school to return to some type of further education.
6. More efforts should be made by high school to encourage potential dropouts to participate in extracurricular activities.
7. Since marriage and jobs are often the reasons given for leaving school, this is an area where more counseling and guidance should be given.

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